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# The University of Montana

## NEWS RELEASE

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Sept. 13, 1994

### **COLLABORATIVE NEGOTIATIONS YIELD PROPOSED CONTRACT FOR UM FACULTY**

#### **MISSOULA --**

A year of intense collaborative talks toward a new University of Montana - Missoula faculty contract has yielded a wide-ranging agreement that aims to improve education at UM through the end of this century.

The plan, subject to approval by faculty members and the state Board of Regents, was announced Tuesday at a news conference featuring Gov. Marc Racicot and Commissioner of Higher Education Jeff Baker. The document includes a four-year contract beginning July 1, 1993 -- the date when the faculty's last contract ended -- and provisions for an additional two years that will extend the plan through June 30, 1999.

"This is an historic agreement, a pact by faculty, administrators, students and employees to improve The University of Montana in countless ways including creating for the first time a detailed program of educational enhancements tied directly to a faculty pay plan," Racicot said.

"We were pleased to be invited to join this unique collaborative process because we believe strongly that new partnerships are necessary throughout our society if Montana is going to prepare properly for all of the challenges awaiting us before the next century."

The plan includes provisions to:

- increase students' contact with professors;
- spend more money on instruction and less on administration;

-more-

- expand class schedules to include Saturday and evening sessions;
- double the University's four-year graduation rate;
- provide active, effective advising to reduce the percentage of students on academic probation and lessen the likelihood of students changing majors;
- increase the faculty instructional workload by 20 percent over the plan's six-year span;
- raise faculty salaries an average of 4.8 percent per year over six years; and
- increase funding for library acquisitions, computers, and laboratory and other equipment.

"The outcome is a better education for our students," Baker said. "All of the participants in this process have come together with an agreement that is really very student-focused, and that is vital."

Management Professor Richard Dailey, president of the University Teachers Union, said perhaps the best thing about the agreement is the process behind it -- a collaboration that represents a radical change from traditional contract negotiations.

"We've attempted to turn around a situation that has historically been adversarial into one that's more cooperative, and with an attempt to build trust relationships on all sides," Dailey said, adding that the attempt appears to have been successful.

"All the stakeholders had their concerns addressed, and it represents give-and-take on all sides," he said. "No one party likes everything about it; that's no doubt an indication of a good contract."

Collaborative negotiations began in September 1993 and included representatives of the UTU, the UM administration, the Commissioner of Higher Education, the Governor's Office, UM students, the Board of Regents and the state Legislature.

"I want to express my appreciation to all the members of the bargaining team who worked



so long and hard for this result," UM President George Dennison said. "This agreement will enable the University to realize its highest priority within a reasonable period -- competitive salaries for a dedicated, talented and committed faculty."

Faculty members are expected to vote on the four-year contract portion of the plan before the pact goes to the Board of Regents for approval at the Regents' Sept. 22-23 meeting. Dailey and chief UTU negotiator Jerry Furniss predicted that the faculty will approve the contract, although some provisions, especially those that address faculty workload, are likely to prompt deep concern.

The plan calls for gradually increasing faculty members' instructional workload from about 14.2 credit hours to an equivalent of 16.5 to 18 credit hours in 1998. The plan recognizes that faculty responsibilities go beyond the classroom to include research, advising and service, Furniss said, noting that certain intensive non-classroom activities, such as heading a graduate student's dissertation committee, will be factored into the credit-hour equivalencies. Each department, with the administration's approval, will establish its own equivalencies, he said.

Faculty salaries will go up by an average of 1.5 percent this fiscal year and approximately 6.9 percent in each of the next four years under the agreement. No salary increase was included for the first year of the plan, 1993-94, providing an average annual increase of 4.8 percent over the six-year period. Only the first four years of the agreement are in contract form; projected raises for years five and six may be renegotiated if there is a revenue shortfall or if the student learning and institutional productivity goals are not realized.

The projected increases aim to bring UM salaries closer to those at universities in states with similar per capita incomes, Furniss said.

"We're not likely to catch them, because we're going after a moving target," Dailey said,

"but this will help."

Other encouraging news for faculty is the planned establishment of a quality and access fund that will set aside \$350,000 per year beginning in fiscal 1996, Furniss said. The money would be distributed on a competitive basis to fund departments' proposals for innovative ways to enhance the quality of education at UM, he said.

The plan will be funded through higher tuition, increased millage revenue, enrollment changes and more efficient use of faculty and administrative time. No new state money is anticipated other than the funds made available through the state pay plan. The agreement assumes that state general fund appropriations will not drop below the current level, and that six mill levy revenues will rise by 3 percent a year beginning next year.

Tuition is projected to increase an average of 6.5 percent a year beginning in fiscal 1996. Beginning this year, out-of-state students will pay the total cost of their education; by 1999, in-state students will pay approximately 30 percent. In return for higher tuition, students may expect better access to classes, more effective advising and more time with their professors, both one-on-one and in the classroom.

Each year, the University will report its progress on meeting the goals outlined in the plan. A subcommittee of negotiation participants also will monitor progress.

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